

Video games

It started innocently enough. Just a boy at his aunt's house, a block-shaped box of electronics, two straight lines and a bouncing, pixilated "ball." The 1970s seem further away than ever, but the transcendent feeling of playing "Pong" repeatedly with my little brother has never vanished.

I've saved the world on Atari 2600 and won the World Series on Intellivision. I rescued a young lass repeatedly in Donkey Kong on ColecoVision and whooped Mike Tyson in his own game on Nintendo. After college I bloodied up Wayne Gretzky (I feel sort of bad about it now) on Sega Genesis, and took it to the hole on Iverson in the company's later Dreamcast. Gran Turismo brought hours of relaxation on PlayStation during graduate school. Now, as an Xbox dad, I still can skate with Tony Hawk and, frankly, kick Tiger all over St. Andrews.

Sure, video games have given me a false sense of athleticism, a penchant to think of the merge lane as an opening and turned me into a WWII hero. I know it's not real, but man, are they still fun.

What is real is a \$10.5-billion industry dedicated to giving folks like me — almost 25 percent of all home video-game players are age 35 or older — an escape. Also real is the holiday season release of sequels to Nintendo's GameCube and PlayStation II. Before you

DOING YOUR HOMEWORK ON THIS PURCHASE MIGHT BE THE MOST FUN YOU HAVE ALL HOLIDAY SEASON **BY MARK LUCE**



drop some serious change to allow yourself (I mean, your child) to play with joysticks or Nunchucks (see below), take a minute to brush up on the latest. Keep in mind, we're not in Pong-land anymore.

Xbox360: Released during the last holiday season, Microsoft got the jump on its rivals with its second-generation machine. The controllers are the same as the Xbox, but now it's wireless. The graphics will drop your jaw, especially on high-definition television. It's a DVD player to boot (\$299 to \$399).

PlayStation 3: Sony says the new system will be 35 times more powerful than PlayStation 2 and twice as powerful as Xbox360. While many liken the debate between PlayStation and Xbox to

the Apple/PC war, there will exist no earthly gaming experience like playing Gran Turismo HD on PS3 with a wide-screen HDTV (\$499 to \$599).

Nintendo Wii: Seemingly chump change in cost compared to the others, but Nintendo is rolling the dice on a new controlling system, a two-pronged attack featuring the Wii-Remote and the wonderfully named Nunchuck. The controllers move based on your movement. So, if playing a tennis game, you actually swing your arm to hit the ball. The learning curve is steep. Ice for tennis elbow not included (\$250).

Whichever system you or your child chooses, keep in mind that new games run about \$60, and none of the systems come with two controllers. To beat the high cost of new games, don't forget to check out the growing number of traditional and online stores that sell used games, which often can be picked up for much less. Remember, too, to play before you pay.

Happy holidays.

Mark Luce is a freelance writer based in Kansas City, Mo., where he still can't figure out Halo or Halo II.

GOLFDOM (ISSN 1526-4270) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group, Inc., 306 W Michigan Street, Suite 200, Duluth, MN 55802. Corporate office: 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. Accounting, Advertising, Production and Circulation offices: 306 W. Michigan St., Suite 200 Duluth, MN 55802-1610. Subscription rates: One year \$39 (U.S. and possessions), \$59 (Canada and Mexico) and \$89 (all other countries). Air expedited service is available in countries outside the U.S. and Canada for an additional \$75 per year. Current issue single copies (prepaid only) \$5 (U.S. and possessions), \$7 (Canada and Mexico) and \$8 (all other countries). Back issues (if available, prepaid only) \$10 (U.S. and possessions), \$14 (Canada and Mexico) and \$16 (all other countries); add \$6.50 per order shipping and handling for both current and back issue purchases. Periodicals postage paid at Duluth MN 55806 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to GOLFDOM, P.O. Box 5057, Brentwood, TN 37024-5057. Canadian G.S.T. Number: 840033278RT0001, Publications Mail Agreement number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A. Copyright 2006 by Questex Media Group, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by Questex Media for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923, phone 978-750-8400, fax 978-750-4470. Call for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. For those not registered with the CCC, send permission request to questexpermissions@reprintbuyer.com or 800-494-9051, ext 100.